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Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General and German Chancellor appeal to Croatia to reverse decision not to accept extension of UNPROFOR mandate; say withdrawal of Force would not be in interest of peace.

+ Germany says it will, in principle, participate in United Nations stand-by arrangements for peace-keeping; Secretary-General says even symbolic German commitment would be very valuable.

+ Security Council resumes discussion of Secretary-General's position paper on peace-keeping; Brazil says new agenda for development is essential for success of any agenda for peace.

+ Secretary-General says UNMIH will be able to take over from Multinational Force by 31 March; expresses confidences in Mission's ability to sustain secure and stable environment in Haiti.

+ Negotiating Committee on International Convention to Combat Desertification concludes sixth session.

+ Governing Council of United Nations Compensation Commission elects Italy as President, and Indonesia as Vice-President, for 1995-1996.

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On the third day of his visit to Germany, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today met with Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl, according to a United Nations spokesman. The Secretary-General expressed deep appreciation for Germany's strong and steady support for the Organization. The Chancellor informed him that he would participate in the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Copenhagen in March.

After their meeting, the Secretary-General and the Chancellor strongly appealed to Croatia to reverse its decision not to accept a further renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) beyond 31 March. They said the Force's withdrawal from the country would not be in the interests of peace, or Croatia, or the former Yugoslavia as a whole.

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The Secretary-General also met today in Bonn with Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, for a discussion which focused on peace-keeping operations. He stressed the importance of Germany's participation in those activities, even if on a small scale, as a symbolic expression of its commitment to peace-keeping. The Foreign Minister said that Germany would, in principle, participate in United Nations stand-by arrangements. However, in view of the re-organization of the German Army, details would have to be worked out later. He stressed that his country's participation in operations would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Also today, the Secretary-General delivered a lecture at a seminar for chief editors and high-level officials on Germany and international security. He spoke on "The role of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security: What to expect from Germany". The seminar was sponsored by the Federal College for Security Policy Studies.

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The Security Council today continued its discussion of the Secretary-General's recent position paper supplementing "An Agenda for Peace". The representative of Brazil told the Council that peace and security could not be dissociated from social end economic well-being. A new agenda for development was essential for the success of any agenda for peace. It was important to create a true partnership between the less and the more developed as a crucial step towards an equitable and peaceful international system. In peacemaking and peace-keeping, the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence were essential to the success of United Nations endeavours.

Ireland's representative welcomed the development of a multi-faceted approach to peace-keeping. Where appropriate, a human rights dimension should be provided for in humanitarian and peace-keeping operations. The usefulness of preventive diplomacy had been demonstrated repeatedly. Too often, however, the offer of United Nations assistance was rejected or came too late. It was vital to ensure that all information on a potential crisis was expeditiously brought to the attention of the competent organs and that appropriate action was taken quickly. In Rwanda, for example, ample information on the deterioration of the situation was available in advance, but did not lead to timely preventive action.

Yesterday, speaking on behalf of the European Union, the representative of France said the prevention of conflict remained the best method of peace-keeping. Protection of human rights and measures to promote economic stability were aspects of preventive diplomacy. He supported regular financing of peacemaking missions, as well as preventive deployment of troops even in the absence of consent. He expressed concern about the issue of rapid deployment. The stockpiling of reserves left over from operations should be considered for the start-up of new ones. While the provision of stand-by arrangements did not guarantee the provision of forces, the stand-by system would work if enough Member States made commitments.

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Japan's representative stressed the importance of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. A list of persons with the requisite skills and experience to serve as mediators or special envoys should be prepared. Where persons lacked sufficient experience, training should be provided. There was a need for small field missions to engage in preventive diplomacy and peacemaking efforts in a timely manner. Adherence to traditional peace-keeping principles was essential to the success of any operation. For an operation to be truly successful, it must be integrated into an overall political process from the beginning. He went on to say that sanctions were one of the few effective instruments that could be used to convey the will of the international community without resorting to the use of force. Japan was ready to consider the impact of sanctions as it formulated its aid policy, he added.

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The United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) should be able to take over from the Multinational Force on or around 31 March, according to the Secretary-General. In a report to the Security Council dated 17 January, he said the security situation in Haiti had improved considerably since the Force's deployment, the end of the de facto régime and the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The constitutional Government exercised its authority throughout the country, and there was no serious danger to its existence. He recommended that the Council extend UNMIH for six months to 31 July.

The Secretary-General expressed confidence that the Mission would be able to fulfil its mandate satisfactorily and give all necessary assistance to the Haitian Government to sustain a secure and stable environment. However, conditions in Haiti would not be the same as those which were foreseen when the Council adopted resolutions 867 (1993) and 940 (1994). For example, the Haitian Armed Forces had collapsed in a matter of days, leaving the country without a security force. The Multinational Force had thus begun training an Interim Public Security Force as a stop-gap measure. While the tasks originally entrusted to UNMIH by the Council remained valid, its mandate might have to be adapted to the realities on the ground.

The Secretary-General went on to say that the security now enjoyed by the Haitian people remained very fragile. There were many factors that could lead to instability: the disaffection of former members of the Armed Forces, especially those who had been demobilized; the probable existence of paramilitary networks and the availability of arms; rising frustration at the inability of the justice system to address past human rights violations and current criminality; the delay in translating economic measures and development programmes into concrete improvements in the daily lives of the poor; and the additional tension that might be generated by upcoming elections.

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The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification concluded its sixth session after holding three plenary meetings yesterday. At its final meeting, the Committee asked its interim secretariat to make arrangements to promote public

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awareness of the Convention in order to ensure the successful observance of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought. The General Assembly proclaimed the Day in 1994, to be observed annually on 17 June.

The Committee also established two working groups to carry out certain functions prior to the entry into force of the Convention. Working Group I will initiate measures to identify an organization to house the global mechanism for mobilizing and channelling financial resources. It will also be responsible for designating a permanent secretariat for the mechanism, and for making arrangements for its functioning. Working Group II will organize scientific and technological cooperation, particularly the terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology. It will also be responsible for: the establishment of a roster of independent experts; the rules of procedures for the conference of Parties to the Convention; procedures on questions of implementation; and procedures for conciliation and arbitration.

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The Governing Council of the United Nations Compensation Commission, established by the Security Council to review claims resulting from Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait, has elected Italy as its President for 1995-1996, replacing Spain which held the presidency in 1993-1994. The Council also elected Indonesia as its Vice-President, replacing Brazil. The new President is the Permanent Representative of Italy in Geneva, Giuseppe Baldocci. The new Vice-President is Soemadi D.M. Brotodiningrat, the Permanent Representative of Indonesia in Geneva.

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